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TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [KISL](#) [KE](#)
SUBJECT: COASTAL SECURITY KEY TO KENYAN COUNTER-TERRORISM
EFFORTS

REF: NAIROBI 0873

Classified By: PolCouns Michael J. Fitzpatrick, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Members of post,s Coastal Security Working Group discussed the security situation and options for engagement with law enforcement and local leaders during a three-day visit to Lamu. The U.S. Navy Special Warfare training program in Lamu is progressing well, and post is looking into other options to build on their success and further security along the coast up to the Somali border. Efforts will need to encourage increased cooperation among the Kenya Police, the Navy and the Wildlife Service to improve effectiveness of coastal patrols. END SUMMARY.

Navy Training Program Producing Results

12. (C) POLOFF traveled to Lamu November 2-5 with CJTF-HOA Civil Affairs (CA) team and Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) Deputy Program Manager to look at coastal security issues and explore avenues for engagement. Post,s Coastal Security Working Group (CSWG) views the waters from Lamu to the Somali border at Kiunga as vital to our counter-terrorism efforts in Kenya, and as such are looking at a multi-tracked approach to enhancing Kenya,s capacity to patrol these waters. The most robust effort presently remains Maritime Operations (MAROPS) training conducted by U.S. Navy Special Warfare personnel out of Manda Bay Navy Base. (NOTE: The 10th cycle of the MAROPS course was completed on November 2nd. The course incorporated students from the Kenyan Navy, Kenya Police, Administrative Police and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS); 15 students successfully completed the course. During the final maritime interdiction operations, the students successfully boarded 27 boats, confiscated two dhows and arrested eight people smuggling endangered species. END NOTE.)

13. (C) POLOFF and ATA officer met with the Commander of the U.S. Navy Special Warfare Unit contingent at Manda Bay. He assessed their presence on the waters has contributed to security by deterring possible arms smugglers, drug runners or terrorists. Although the Kenyan Navy has not detected any of this type of activity during their training or boardings, their increased presence, backed by the U.S. Naval presence, is known and felt throughout the area. (NOTE: The MAROPS students have had at least two successful boardings over the past six months, which led to the arrest of illegal turtle-meat smugglers. These arrests were publicized in the media. END NOTE). The commander noted that the addition of

the Kenya Police, Administrative Police and KWS to the training has contributed to strengthening the necessary inter-agency cooperation on coastal security. Because the Kenya Navy does not have arrest authority, it is key to incorporate the two police agencies and KWS into maritime patrols.

Kiunga: Key to Securing Kenya

14. (C) The group attempted to travel to Kiunga by boat on November 4, but was unsuccessful due to abnormally low tides.

Kiunga is completely isolated from the rest of Kenya, both economically and socially. The road from Kiunga to Lamu is un-drivable during the rainy season, and even newspapers are hard to come by. There are two water routes from Lamu to Kiunga, one through the channels, and one through open ocean waters. From town, during high tides, the journey would take approximately two hours by speedboat along the channels plus one hour by road. The boat operators in Lamu do not feel comfortable traveling through the open waters and readily admit there is no security closer to the Somali border. Embosfs were able to find a speedboat operator to take us as far as Mkokoni, approximately a 40 minute drive from Kiunga. Once we passed the outlying Pate Island, boat traffic reduced drastically. In fact, we did not pass any other boats after Kiwaih Bay, approximately halfway between Lamu Town and Kiunga. Just a few miles south of Mkokoni, extremely low tides forced embosfs to turn back. (COMMENT: The ordeal of finding a boat operator comfortable with taking us north of Mkokoni highlighted the need for increased security presence in these waters. Cost was not even the issue, as Lamu residents readily admit they were nervous about banditry and &bad guys8 in the northern-most tip of the Kenyan coast. END COMMENT).

15. (C) Chairman of the Lamu chapter of the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM) and a private contractor working closely with CA team, Aboud Abu Bakaar, spoke openly about the insecurity in and around Kiunga. He said he did not tell anyone of his plans when he traveled there in the past with CA teams because of fears that someone would send word to their &Somali associates8 in Kiunga, who could create trouble for the Americans. He said the 12 kilometers between Kiunga and the Somali border are completely unpatrolled, and he would not advise moving through those areas without armed security. The Somali community crosses the border virtually unchecked; most have relatives that reside on the Kenya side of the border. Abu Bakaar assessed that the majority of terrorist-related activities that occur in Kenya are supported by Somalis who come through Kiunga either by boat or road and move freely into Lamu Town and beyond. (COMMENT: There are just four official border crossing points along the entire 862 kilometer Somali-Kenya border: Mandera, Liboi, El Wak and Kiunga. POLOFF visited the Liboi border in June. Somalis cross this border without trouble, choosing whether or not to register at the immigration office in town, a 20-minute drive from the border. Abu Bakaar described the exact same scenario for the Kiunga crossing. END COMMENT.)

Police Face Security Challenges

16. (C) POLOFF and ATA officer called on the new Officer Commanding Police Divison (OCPD), John Kamau, in Lamu Town to discuss security issues. Kamau replace Mohamed Yerow (reftel) on September 26. Unlike his predecessor, Kamau openly admit the security challenges he faces, particularly in Kiunga and in the waters. Kamau said he believes the terrorist threat in Kenya is both high and credible, worrying that, with the upcoming anniversary of the November 2002 Kikambala bombing, &these guys8 might want to remind us of their presence. He said Lamu, in particular, is fertile ground for terrorists to operate. He highlighted the challenge of border security, saying he has no partner to work with on the Somali side of the Kiunga border, as it is run by militia. He stressed the

need for a controllable road from Kiunga in order to be able to increase inland patrols. As for the waters, drugs, piracy, arms trafficking and terrorist movement are the main issues. He believed terrorists use Kiunga as their major transit point and Lamu for their planning.

17. (C) Complicating matters are the local Sheikhs, who Kamau accused of working against the police by pulling the religious card whenever the Police (or the Kenya Navy, backed by U.S. Navy) make progress in investigations, arrests or detentions. As has happened in the past when the MAROPS students successfully arrested turtle-meat smugglers, Kamau said the Sheikhs attempt to distract Lamu residents from the issues of terrorism by whipping up local sentiment and accusing the Police (or U.S. Marines) of harassing Muslims. Kamau admitted he will have trouble working closely with the Sheikhs as he is not Muslim, but he has Muslim police officers under his command who will continue to work with the religious leaders.

18. (C) Kamau said his biggest need is boats to patrol the waters. The Lamu Police have two boats, but one is completely broken and the other is in bad shape. Kamau has to ask the Kenya Airports Authority or KWS to loan him boats if he needs to respond to a threat or situation in the water. Kamau said that without working boats, it is impossible to do the job of the police in Lamu. Although he admits the police will not have the capacity to adequately patrol all the waters, it is key to have their presence felt by at least putting a few boats out in the water to be seen by all. He firmly believes that deterrence is the key, and coastal patrols will contribute greatly to this.

19. (C) Another of Kamau's goals as new OCPD is to work more closely with the other security elements in Lamu. Currently, the police and military cannot communicate as they do not have compatible radios. Kamau wants to build a cohesive team with the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), Central Investigation Department (CID) and KWS, but he has had trouble coordinating efforts with the Navy and Fisheries Department. He appealed to us to help empower the police, saying the Navy cannot effectively patrol the water on their own, especially as the police are the ones with arrest authority.

COMMENT

10. (C) COMMENT: Two conclusions were glaringly clear from this visit. FIRST: There is still vast amounts of work to be done on coastal security; Kenyan inter-agency cooperation is the key to success. The Manda Bay model of their most recent MAROPS course, incorporating the Navy, Police and KWS into one class, should be the example for future training. No one agency can do it on their own, and each clearly sees coastal security as a top priority. The new OCPD is serious about combating terrorism and should be a good partner. Unlike his predecessor, who sugar-coated the security situation and did not address anything of real substance with POLOFF, Kamau is well-versed, intelligent, and takes this position seriously.

11. (C) COMMENT (CONTINUED): SECOND: Kiunga is a vital area for both coastal and border security. Poor, disenfranchised and conservative, with a large Somali community that moves freely across the border, residents in Kiunga are susceptible to outsiders who could exploit their isolation. We do not have a current foothold in Kiunga. The CA teams are beginning to look at engagement in the area, which will greatly enhance access in the near term, and hopefully security in the longer term. Kiunga will present new challenges for us, particularly because of its geographic isolation, but the opportunities to further Post's Muslim outreach efforts and enhance security are considerable. END COMMENT.
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